

read 10/5/92
discussed 10/15/92

El Scherno - ~~Elly~~ Wiener

Ending needs work

~~Viewers asked to disbelieve Scherno's
magic and believe not C's magic~~ + Jack Frost

Involve kids more directly

Resolve so that Passengers are not all dupes

{ 2 thought so } -
{ 2 never really believe him }

Asking audience to reject superstition

(fortune telling) by accepting
magic (Jack Frost) (p. 10)

SHINING TIME STATION

"EL SCHEMO"

BY

ELLIS WEINER

**From characters and storylines created by
Britt Allcroft and Rick Siggelkow**

**TORONTO DRAFT
SEPTEMBER 17, 1992**

SCENE 1
(MAINSET)

(DAYTIME. SOME DISGRUNTLED
PASSENGERS MILL AROUND NEAR THE
PLATFORM, WAITING TO GO. AT MAIN
DESK, INTONES FORMALLY.)

STACY:

May I have your attention
please. I'm sorry,
but the trains still
aren't running.

(PASSENGERS REACT, EXASPERATED.)

PASSENGER 1:

What's the problem?
Don't tell me the trains
can't run in a little
cold weather.

STACY:

The trains are fine. But
this frost took us all by
surprise. The switches
along the tracks are
frozen .

PASSENGER 1:

So what do we do? Wait a
week until the weather
warms up?

STACY:

People up and down the
line are working on the
problem. When the
switches are shifting
properly, we'll be up and
running again.
Meanwhile, thank you for
your patience.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

(SHE SMILES, RETURNS TO DESK.
PASSENGERS REACT, GO TO BENCHES,
OPEN NEWSPAPERS, ETC., AS ON
PLATFORM ENTRANCE --)

(SCHEMER APPEARS, LADEN WITH OLD
SCARVES, GLOVES, ETC...)

SCHEMER:

Did somebody say "cold"?
Did somebody say bitter-
wintry-freezing-frigid
bite-your-toesies-off
cold?

(HE HUSTLES DOWN TO PASSENGERS.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

See Schemer, and get
ready for his quality
line of first-rate
quality cold weather
merchandise.

(unfurls ratty scarf)
TA-DAAAA!

(HE SEES ITS HOLES, ETC., AND
QUICKLY GETS RID OF IT.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

Not ta-daa that. That's
one of my test models.
Ta-daa...this!

(HE PULLS OUT ANOTHER, UNFURLS IT
-- MORE HOLES. HE THROWS IT OVER
HIS SHOULDER AND RUMMAGES THROUGH
HIS STOCK AS --)

(OFF PLATFORM, DAN ENTERS, RUBBING
HANDS, CROSSES TO STACY AT DESK)

(AT PLATFORM, GINNY APPEARS,
EXULTANT. SHE SPOTS SCHEMER, STILL
WORKING THE CROWD. SHE CROSSES TO
HIM)

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

But look at this. One
hundred percent wool, not
counting the non-wool
components --

GINNY:

Hey, hey, hey! There he is.
Schemer, you prognosticating
genius, you.

fortune - telling

(SHE GIVES HIM A HUG AND KISSES HIM
ON THE CHEEK. HE'S STUNNED.)

SCHEMER:

Uh, Ginny ...

GINNY:

I just love this man.
And so do my tomatoes.

(STACY AND DAN SEE THIS, GO OVER TO
WATCH, UNDER --)

SCHEMER:

Ladies and gentlemen,
Ginny of Farmer's Dell.
Another satisfied
customer of Schemer
Winter Wear.

GINNY:

Winter wear my foot,
Schemer. I want to thank
you for saving my
beefsteak crop with that
miracle gizmo of yours.

SCHEMER:

Huh? I mean, which
miracle gizmo are you
referring to.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

(POINTS TO ARCADE)

That fortune telling machine. I stopped by yesterday, popped in a nickel to kill some time, and got the lowdown skinny from the Great Beyond.

nutty nutty

(SHE PRODUCES A SMALL SLIP OF PAPER, HOLDS IT OUT. STACY TAKES, READS ALOUD AS PASSENGERS GATHER AND LISTEN IN)

STACY:

"A sudden change in the weather. Take steps to avert disaster."

GINNY:

Which I did. Not that I'm superstitious. But I looked at those tomatoes, hangin' on the vines out there, and I figured, what the hey. So I covered 'em with burlap, fired up the smoke pots, and boom.

SCHEMER:

Boom? I mean, how "boom"?

GINNY:

Boom comes this frost! Tomatoes all over the Valley are freezing up and hangin' there like Christmas tree bulbs. But my little beauties are nice and soft. When the weather turns back, they'll come in red and ready.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Ginny, let me see if I
have this straight.
You're saying my machine
predicted the future?

GINNY:

That's the deal from my
end. *from where she's standing*

(PASSENGERS BURST INTO EXCITED
CHATTER WHILE SCHEMER REACTS)

DAN:

Can a machine really tell
the future?

STACY:

Of course not. It was a
coincidence

SCHEMER:

Coincidence? Tell that
to Ginny's tomatoes!

STACY:

Oh, come on, Schemer.
The machine happened to
say the weather would
change, and in this case,
it did. It was luck.

SCHEMER:

Miss Jones, I think I
speak for myself, and
Ginny, and these
wonderful people here,
when I tell you that I
am deeply offended. I
bring into Shining Time
Station a Machine that
can predict the future,
and you sneer. You sneer
and jeer. Shame on you.

(PASSENGERS NOD)

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

(PASSENGERS CHEER)

Ladies and gentlemen, the
machine awaits. Who
wants to try?

(PASSENGERS YELL AND WAVE AS
SCHEMER AND GINNY LEAD THEM TO
ARCADE, WHERE THEY LINE UP AT
MACHINE AS STACY SHRUGS AT DAN)

DAN:

Shouldn't we try to stop
them?

STACY:

People have a right to
believe silly things.
What makes me nervous is,
if they start believing
Schemer's machine, they
may start believing
Schemer.

DAN:

That's impossible!
Nobody really believes
Schemer. (beat) Do they?

(STACY MERELY GESTURES "VOILA!"
CUT TO ARCADE, WHERE PASSENGERS
ARE ANXIOUS TO USE MACHINE, AND
SCHEMER IS SLAPPING BACKS, SHAKING
HANDS, ETC ...)

SCENE 2
(INT. JUKE BOX)

(TITO'S VAULT. TITO IS ON LADDER,
LOOKING INTO PIGGY BANK EXCITEDLY.
ELEVATOR LOWERS INTO VIEW AND DIDI
STEPS OUT)

DIDI:

Hey, Tito --

TITO:

I know! The trains
can't run, so the
passengers are hanging
out in the station. And
that means they're
putting money in the
juke box, right?

DIDI:

Wrong.

TITO:

We gotta get upstairs to
play, right?

DIDI:

Wrong.

TITO:

They probably got ten
different songs they want
to hear, right?

DIDI:

Wrong ten times! They're
not putting money in the
juke box. They're
putting money into
Schemer's fortune
telling machine.

TITO:

What? that piece of
junk!

SCENE 2 (CONT'D)

DIDI:

Schemer told them his
machine can tell the future.

TITO:

But that's wrong!

DIDI:

You're right.

(ELEVATOR DOOR CLOSES; ELEVATOR
GOES UP AS TITO MOANS AND SHAKES
HIS HEAD.)

SCENE 3
(INT. ARCADE)

(DAN WORRIEDLY WATCHES AS THE PASSENGERS PUT MONEY IN THE FORTUNE TELLER AND RECEIVE THEIR FORTUNES AS SCHEMER SMILES)

PASSENGER 1:
(reading fortune)

"Good news from a trusted advisor. Be prepared to act on it."

SCHEMER:

Uh, yes, the trusted advisor is ... the machine! So to get some good news, get back in line and put in another nickel!

(PASSENGER 1 NODS, GETS BACK IN LINE)

(DAN REACTS TO THIS, BUT IS DISTRACTED BY --)

(AT BILLY'S WORKSHOP, MR. CONDUCTOR APPEARS)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Psst! Dan!

(HE MOTIONS FOR DAN TO JOIN HIM. DAN CROSSES TO --)

(INTERIOR OF BILLY'S WORKSHOP -- DAN JOINS MR. CONDUCTOR AND KARA, WHO IS TAKING OFF HER COAT, GLOVES, HAT, ETC.)

KARA:

It is freezing! I was helping Billy but I had to come in. My nose is turning to ice.

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I've been helping out up
and down the line too..
When somebody isn't
looking, and reaches for
a tool, and its a little
closer then he thinks it
is? That's me. I push
it over, it's the least
I can do, considering ...

DAN:

Considering what, Mr.
Conductor?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Considering that I know
the person who's
responsible for this
sudden frost. I asked him
not to do it, but he never
listens.

KARA:

you Told who?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Jack Frost, Who else? He's the
one who made it so cold
out there.

DAN:

Well, thanks to Jack
Frost, everybody thinks
Schemer can see the
future. Ginny got a
fortune that said, look
out for bad weather, and
now it came true.

*asking me to
not to reject
superstition
by accepting
magic*

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Oh, that was a coincidence. Jack Frost planned all this a long time ago. You know, it's funny. He loves to confuse people with cold weather, but personally he's really a very warm individual ...

(KARA IS AT DOOR, LOOKING OUT AT STATION.)

KARA:

Right now he could be Schemer's best friend.

(ANGLE ON WORKSHOP DOOR - KARA, DAN AND MR. CONDUCTOR PEEK OUT AT ARCADE WHERE SCHEMER CONSULTS WITH A CUSTOMER RE: HIS FORTUNE.)

SCHEMER:

" Supporting the arts brings ample benefits..." Yeah, that means, um -- of course! Talk about obvious. It means, put all your money into music--

(points)

-- there! In the juke box!

(CUSTOMER NODS, HEADS FOR JUKE BOX AS DAN, KARA AND MR. CONDUCTOR TRADE A LOOK.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You're right, Dan. All those people believe what Schemer's telling them. I'd better have a little talk with Jack Frost before this turns into trouble.

(HE DISAPPEARS)

SCENE 4
(INT. JUKE BOX)

(MAIN PERFORMANCE AREA -- THE
PUPPETS ARE READY TO GO. DIDI IS
MIFFED.)

TITO:

Here they come, children!
Beaucoup nickels and
how!

DIDI:

That Schemer! He
wouldn't know the truth
if it slapped him in the
face.

REX:

Maybe. But some people
will believe anything,
right, Tex?

TEX:

As long as it's what they
want to hear, Rex.

DIDI:

That doesn't make it
right.

TITO:

Can we discuss this
later? Right now we have
a job to do.
Namely, "Turkey In The Straw."

SCENE 5

PUPPET SONG: TURKEY IN THE STRAW

SCENE 6
(MAIN SET)

(OFF PLATFORM, MIDGE SMOOT HUSTLES IN AND RUNS TO MAIN DESK, WHERE STACY IS TRYING TO DO PAPERWORK DESPITE THE UPROAR AT THE ARCADE)

MIDGE:

Where is he, Stacy?

STACY KEEPS HER EYES ON HER PAPERWORK, BUT SILENTLY POINTS TO ARCADE. MIDGE, HOWEVER, IS SO BESIDE HERSELF SHE DOESN'T SEE)

MIDGE (CONT'D):

I have just heard the most fantastic, amazing, incredible rumor -- so of course I believed it immediately. Because some things are so unbelievable, you just have to believe them.

(beat, reverie)

Just think. Schemer can predict the future. And I thought he was barely able to predict his own name.

]

his own birthday

STACY:

Nobody can predict the future, Midge. His fortune telling machine got lucky, and now everybody thinks he has special powers.

(ANGLE ON PLATFORM. SCHEMER, DRESSED IN TURBAN AND ROBE, APPEARS. HE SETS UP A LITTLE PORTABLE TAPE MACHINE NEARBY, HAS BASKET OF FORTUNE COOKIES IN OTHER HAND)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

And now ... the man with
special powers. The man
who Sees All. The man
who can tell fortunes the
way other men tell
jokes ... let's have a
warm round of Shining
Time Station applause
for the great ... El
Schemo.

(HE TURNS ON THE TAPE PLAYER AND
IT PLAYS A CHEESY "MYSTERIOUS
FANFAIRE". HE SWEEPS OVER THE ARCADE
WITH THE COOKIES. MIDGE SWOONS, FOLLOWS)

MIDGE:

Schemer --

SCHEMER:

Ah-ah! My Dear Miss Smoot! You
weren't listening. You
may address me as ...
(salaams)
... El Schemo.

MIDGE:

El Schemo? Well, it
sounds like a city in
California, but have it
your way. Just tell me:
are you on the level?

} great line --
a New Yorker line

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

On the level? My dear
quaint small-town
busybody, El Schemo is on
a level above that of
mere mortals. Am I not
He who Sees and Knows?

(STACY LAUGHS OUT LOUD. SCHEMER
DIRECTS HIS ATTENTION TO HER.)

You may laugh, Miss Jones
But I have found my true
calling, my mission, my
sacred cause. I look into
the future. And I tell
fortunes ... for the
unfortunate. How do I do
it?

(STACY TAKES SOME COOKIES FROM THE
BASKET. JUST BEFORE SHE OPENS ONE,
SHE SPEAKS SARCASTICALLY)

STACY:

I can't imagine.

SCHEMER:

I join in the cosmic
dance of the universe.
The dancing cosmic energy
of time particles and
space particles and
cosmic dance particles.

STACY:

And after you dance
with the particles, you
write down the future in
these cookies?

SCHEMER:

What's it to ya?

*should do a cosmic
dance - ala
Boonshuy character
parodying modern
dance*

}

and what if I do?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

STACY:
(reading)

"You will spend your money in Schemer's Arcade." "You must spend your nickels in the Arcade." "Spend, spend, spend like mad in Schemer's Arcade."

SCHEMER:

The future speaks!

MIDGE:

Talk to me, future, talk to me!

(HE TAKES MIDGE'S ELBOW TO STEER HER AWAY)

SCHEMER:

Come Miss Smoot. I sense a negative vibration in the neighborhood.

(STACY STOMPS DOWN ON HIS ROBE, STOPPING IN HIS TRACKS)

STACY:

Schemer, this is one of the most outrageous stunts you have ever pulled. These people trust you, and you are cheating them out of their money.

SCHEMER:

Who dares to mouth off to El Schemo?

STACY:

The passengers in this station are my responsibility. I'm going to tell them the truth.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

(SCHEMER LEADS HER OFF TO THE SIDE.
HE WHISPERS URGENTLY)

SCHEMER:

Are you crazy, Miss
Jones? This is the scam
of my life! People are
giving me money just
because I tell them to!
I should have thought of
this ten years ago!

STACY:

You're betraying their
trust in you.

SCHEMER:

I'm cashing in on their
silliness!

STACY:

A lie is a lie. I'm
going to tell them just how
dishonest you are.

(THE PASSENGERS ARE GETTING
RESTLESS, AND START CHANTING.)

PASSENGERS:

Sche-mo! Sche-mo!
(etc...)

(SCHEMER GOES TOWARD THEM, BUT
STACY CALLS OUT.)

STACY:

Wait a minute, everybody
This is all a fake! He
can't predict the future!
Don't waste your money!

PASSENGER 1:

How do you know?

PASSENGER 2:

What about the tomatoes?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

(SCHEMER TURNS, GLOATING, TO STACY)

SCHEMER:

There's no law against
telling a bunch of
suckers what they want to
hear.

(TURNS TO CROWD)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

El Schemo ... will speak!

(THE PASSENGERS CHEER)

STACY:

I think they're just
bored. Once the trains
start running again, all
your so-called followers
will disappear.

SCHEMER:

That's right. And
they'll tell their
friends. And each new
train will bring a fresh
load of customers!

(HE WAVES TO CROWD AS HE RETURNS TO
ARCADE. STACY FOLLOWS, SCOWLING,)

(ANGLE ON ARCADE, SCHEMER HAS SET
UP A PSEUDO-ORNATE THRONE, WHICH HE
MOVES TO IN GREAT POMP. HE SITS AS
CROWD GATHERS AROUND. HE SIGNALS
FOR SILENCE, SHUTS HIS EYES, AND
INTONES)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

El Schemo is receiving
emanations from the
future. The trains --

(MOCK HORROR)

Oh no! Say it isn't so,
future!

PASSENGERS:

What? What is it?
(etc...)

SCHEMER:

All the trains will
derail! All passengers
should take the bus!

(THE CROWD STARTS TO MOVE AS ONE
TOWARD THE PLATFORM)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

But first -- Hey, hold
it!

(CROWD STOPS, LOOKS BACK.)

But first, you should
give all your train fare
to -- El Schemo!

(THE CROWD OBEDIENTLY RETURNS TO
HIM. HE GESTURES TOWARD VASE AT
HIS FEET, INTO WHICH CROWD STARTS
DUMPING ITS MONEY. HE LOOKS OVER
AT THIN-LIPPED STACY, AND SMIRKS)

(AT FORTUNE MACHINE, MIDGE GETS A
FORTUNE, READS, FROWNS)

MIDGE:

"Your home is your
domain. Nature will
submit to your design."
Is that so...?

(ANGEL ON SCHEMER -- HE GIGGLES AT
ALL THE MONEY AS MIDGE ARRIVES.)

why?
who will
be protecting you from
things going wrong
in the future

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

MIDGE:

Look here, Schemerino, or
whatever your name is.

(HANDS HIM FORTUNE.)

Does this mean what I
think it means?

SCHEMER:
(reads, cautious)

Maybe.

MIDGE:

I've got a stand of
poison ivy out back
that's been driving me
crazy. What this tells
me is, I should go tear
that stuff apart with my
bare hands and show it
who's boss! Now is that
right?

SCHEMER:
(beat, smiles)

Why not?

STACY:

Midge! Don't!

MIDGE:

Hot dog! 'Scuse me,
Stacy. I've got a date
with poison ivy.

(SHE LEAVES ON THE RUN. AT THE
PLATFORM, SHE PASSES GINNY, WHO IS
LEADING THE MAYOR IN)

MAYOR:

Ginny, I'm not sure about
this. Sometimes I think
Man wasn't meant to know
the future and neither
was I.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

You owe it to the town,
Mayor Flopdinger.

(SHE LEADS HIM INTO THE CROWD,
MOVING PEOPLE ASIDE)

GINNY (CONT'D):

Excuse us ... got the
Mayor coming through here
... Gang way for His
Honor ...

(THEY REACH SCHEMER WHO BEAMS
COCKILY)

SCHEMER:

Well well, Mister Mayor,
what can I do for you?

MAYOR:

Don't you know already?

(TO GINNY)

I thought he can see the
future. I don't like
this.

(HE STARTS TO LEAVE)

SCHEMER:

I knew you were going to
say that!

MAYOR:

(STOPS)

You did?

SCHEMER:

Yeah. Sort of.

*2 can tell what you will do before you
can for tell what will happen do it
(if I'm very lucky)*

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

The Mayor has an
important question.

(TO MAYOR)

Go on.

MAYOR:

Oh very well. Mr.
Schemer --

SCHEMER:

El Schemo's here for you,
sir.

MAYOR:

Eskimos? Where?

SCHEMER:

Uhm Your Honor, El Schemo
is me.

MAYOR:

Really, I had no idea.

(MIDGE NUDGES HIM)

Yes, yes. Quite right.
Here's the point of my visit.
I want to put a gumball
machine in my office.
But the Town Council
won't let me do it.

STACY:

The Town Council won't
let you put a gumball
machine in your office?
Why not?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

MAYOR:

Let me be more precise.
Gumball machines cost
money, Miss Jones. And I
can not spend a penny of
the tax payers' money
without the Town
Council's approval. In
summary, Miss Jones, they
will not approve my
gumball machine. Well,
Mr. Eskimo, what do you
say to that?

SCHEMER:

(concentrates hard)

Just a moment ... it's
coming to me -- Ah yes.
Mr. Mayor, you tell the
Council that if they
don't vote to approve your
gumball machine, they can't
come to your birthday party.

MAYOR:

(shocked)

Oh, dear. That's rather
extreme. Will it work?

SCHEMER:

It works ^{for} with me. I
predict it will work like
a charm.

GINNY:

And he knows, Your Honor.
Remember how he saved my
tomatoes.

MAYOR:

Yes, so he did. Well, I
don't like having to play
hardball like that,
but ... yes, I'll take it
under advisement. Thank
you.

(HE AND GINNY START TO LEAVE.)

ask future generated question
~~What will the town council~~
~~do if I do it again~~
~~without their approval?~~
What do I need to do
to get ^{Council's} ~~their~~ approval
need
to threaten
them

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

One more thing, El
Schemo. Should I buy
that used truck I've been
looking at?

*Will that used truck
I've been thinking about buying?
Keep working for another
5 years?*

SCHEMER:

Definitely.

STACY:

Wait a minute. Who's
supposed to be able to
see the future? Schemer,
or the fortune teller?

SCHEMER:

Miss Jones, at this
point, the answer is
both. Man and machine
have become one.

STACY:
(to others)

Don't listen to him!
This is all a big fraud!

GINNY:

Many thanks, El. See you
all later.

(GINNY AND THE MAYOR LEAVE AS STACY
WATCHES HELPLESSLY. SHE GLARES AT
SCHEMER, THEN COLLECTS HERSELF AND
WORDLESSLY CROSSES TO BILLY'S
WORKSHOP. SCHEMER CHUCKLES AS THE
CROWD AGAIN GATHERS AROUND HIM)

SCENE 7
(WORKSHOP)

(A BIT LATER, STACY, DAN AND KARA
ARE IN CONFERENCE. ALL LOOK GLUM)

KARA:

I think Schemer is
starting to really
believe all this.

STACY:

What's going to happen
when somebody takes his
advice about something
important?

(they already have)

(ALL THREE SIGH AT ONCE)

(MR. CONDUCTOR APPEARS, FREEZING.
HE STOMPS AROUND TO WARM UP AS THE
OTHERS GIVE LACKLUSTER GREETING)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Boy, you three look as
low as the temperature.

DAN:

Schemer's still at it,
Mr. Conductor.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I know. And Jack Frost
thinks it's hilarious!
He says watching all
these people falling for
Schemer's story is even
more fun than watching
cars skid on ice.

] *snowflakes dance in the wind*

STACY:

If only the trains would
start running again.
Then everyone would leave
and this whole thing
would fade away.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

They've got train
problems on the Isle of
Sodor, too. But I
suppose no one wants to
hear about that...

(BEAT. DAN AND KARA LOOK AT HIM.)

DAN:

Of course we do!

(HE NODS, BLOWS WHISTLE ...)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Well, then what are we
waiting for!

SCENE 8

(THOMAS EPISODE #8 -- "JAMES AND
THE COACHES")

SCENE 9
(WORKSHOP)

(STACY, DAN, KARA, AND MR.
CONDUCTOR)

STACY:

I'm afraid we're going to
need more than boot laces
to solve our problem.

DAN:

We need to be inventive.

KARA:

Just like the driver was
with James.

STACY:

And we'd better act fast.
El Schemo is getting more
popular every minute.
Listen.

(IN ARCADE, SCHEMER IS LEADING THE
CROWD IN A RESPONSIVE CHANT.)

SCHEMER:

EL SCHEMO!

CROWD:

EL SCHEMO!

SCHEMER:

HE'S A DREAM-O!

CROWD:

HE'S A DREAM-O!

SCHEMER/CROWD:

GIVE SHINING/
TIME STATION/
TO HIM-O!

(RESUME - WORKSHOP)

SCENE 9 (CONT'D)

KARA:

He's a dream-o? Yuck.

DAN:

They think he's magical.
(beat)
But you really are
magical, Mr. Conductor.

STACY:

Dan's right. We need
your magic, Mr. Conductor.
Now, I have an idea.
But it's kind of risky.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I'll try anything if you
think it will work.

STACY:

Okay, here's the plan.
If it backfires, things
could be worse than ever.

(THEY HUDDLE TOGETHER AND WHISPER.)
(HE DISAPPEARS, UNDER --)

CROWD/SCHEMER (OS):

Give Shining/
Time Station/
To El-Schemo!

SCENE 10
(ARCADE)

(A BIT LATER. SCHEMER IS LOUNGING ON THE THRONE, SIPPING A BIG FROTHY OVERDONE DRINK AND CALLING OUT TO THE LINE OF CUSTOMERS AT THE FORTUNE TELLING MACHINE)

SCHEMER:

Hey, single file there.

PASSENGER 3:

How come the machine
isn't talking?

SCHEMER:

It writes notes. It
doesn't talk.

(SUDDENLY GINNY, MIDGE, AND THE
MAYOR ARRIVE, STEAMING. MIDGE IS
COVERED WITH PINK CALAMINE
LOTION)

MIDGE:

Schemer --

GINNY:

El Schemerino --

MAYOR:

Mister Eskimo --

MIDGE:

You have some explaining
to do. I took your
advice, and pulled up all
that poison ivy. But it
didn't submit to my
design. It made me
break out all over!

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

I bought that used truck
you told me to, and the
thing conked out two
miles from the lot. It
needs a new transmission,
mister!

MAYOR:

And I ... against my
better judgment ... I
did what you said. I
told the town council
that unless they gave me
my gumball machine,
they couldn't come to my
birthday party. And do
you know what happened?

SCHEMER:

I predict you're going to
tell me.

MAYOR:
(impressed)

Why yes! I am. How did
--

(snaps out of it)
They were so offended,
they told me I couldn't
come to their birthday
parties, and then they
passed a law saying I
couldn't even eat gumballs
in my office.

jelly beans

(ALL THREE START BABBLING AT ONCE
AS STACY, KARA AND DAN ARRIVE)

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Uh, maybe you didn't do
it right --

(grandly)

El Schemo will explain!

(as himself;panicky)

Don't blame me. This
isn't the future. THE
future isn't here yet.

(grandly)

Ordinary people!
Silence!

(all grow quiet)

I will consult with the
Beyond. All of you --
put more money into the
machine!

GINNY:

This one's on you,
Schemer.

(HE REACTS, DIGS OUT A NICKEL, GOES
TO MACHINE AS OTHERS CROWD AROUND)

(INSERT: IN MACHINE, WE SEE MR.
CONDUCTOR, IN COSTUME, REPLACE THE
MANNEQUIN FACE)

(RESUME - SCHEMER ADDRESSES THE
CROWD)

SCHEMER:

El Schemo reminds you
that the machine will
issue a note which I will
interpret. The machine
itself, of course --

(PUTS NICKEL IN)

-- does not speak.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

What do you want, El
Schemo?

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:
(terrified, bleats)

HAH? Uh, um, what do you
know, it talks!
Tell me of the future, O
talking machine!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You cannot see the
future. Nor can I.
No one can see the future.

(THE CROWD REACTS)

SCHEMER:

Um--ha ha! What a joker!
El Schemo admires your
sense of humor--

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You told these people lies
to get their money.
Shame on you!

less direct attack

SCHEMER:

Well, I--you know, I made
a few guesses about some
things--

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You twisted around my
messages. Your predictions
are all wrong. You are a
phony.

SCHEMER:

Oh yeah? What about
Ginny's tomatoes?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Are you kidding? That
was a coincidence!

(THE PASSENGERS, MAYOR, GINNY,
MIDGE REACT)

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

PASSENGER 1:

That's the last time I
ever spend one cent in
your Arcade. You fake.

SCHEMER:

An evil spirit has taken
over the machine! El
Schemo predicts --

PASSENGER 2:

You lied to us.

(ALL START LEAVING THE ARCADE AS
THE GLARE AT SCHEMER)

SCHEMER:

Who are you going to
believe? Some
talking machine? or El
Schemo himself?

(ANGLE ON MAIN AREA -- STACY, DAN
AND KARA WATCH)

DAN:

I almost feel sorry for
him.

KARA:

Almost.

SFX: TRAIN WHISTLE.

(STACY'S EYES LIGHT UP. SHE DASHES
ONTO THE PLATFORM)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Schemer...?

SCHEMER:

Can't you be quiet for
two minutes?

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Are you ready to
apologize to everyone?

SCHEMER:

Apologize? El Schemo?
Ha ha ha!

(ALL FALL SILENT, LOOK AT SCHEMER,
THEN TURN THEIR BACKS ON HIM AND
WALK AWAY. SCHEMER TRIES TO LURE
THEM BACK)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

But perhaps El Schemo
will apologize. If he is
asked nicely.

(THE CROWD CONTINUES TO IGNORE HIM
-- AS STACY RUNS IN FROM THE
PLATFORM)

STACY:

The trains are running!
All aboard!

(ALL JOSTLE PAST SCHEMER AND HEAD
OUT TO THE TRAINS)

MIDGE:

I never want to talk to
than man again.

GINNY:

I can't believe I fell
for his line of hooey.

MAYOR:
(to Schemer)

And I don't think you
really are an Eskimo.

(THEY LEAVE)

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Okay! I apologize! I'm
sorry! Really! (etc..)

(HE PLEADS AS ALL FILE OUT EXCEPT
STACY AND THE KIDS. FINALLY
SILENCE)

He should have
the chance to
apologize
with people
listening

SCHEMER:

Everybody thinks I'm no
good.

STACY:

I wonder why? Could it
be because you lied,
cheated, and stole
people's money?

SCHEMER:

That's not a good enough
reason for everyone to
hate me, is it?
(A BEAT) Okay, it is.

be mad at

STACY:

Are you going to pull
this stunt again, Schemer?

SCHEMER:

(contrite)

No, Miss Jones...

(a glint)

But it was fun while it
lasted.

(to deadpan kids)

I mean, can you believe
those dukes? Thinking
machines can talk and
tell the future?

people

DAN:

But the machine did talk.

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Dan, my lad, that was
some wise guy passenger
hiding in the back.
Okay, so he called
my bluff. But those
chumps really believed
it!

probably just

*who was a ventriloquist
or something*

KARA:

So the machine really
can't talk?

SCHEMER:

Kara, you too? Boy, it's
really true, isn't it. A
sucker is born every
hour. Meet two of 'em.

(ANGLE ON ARCADE - MR. CONDUCTOR
APPEARS, STANDING ON MACHINE)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sche-merrr....

(SCHEMER FREEZES, PETRIFIED)

SCHEMER:

I didn't hear that.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sche-merr! It is I! The
spirit of the machine! I
think I'll ~~haunt you for~~
~~the rest of your life!~~

SCHEMER:

No! Leave me alone!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Don't you want me to tell
you the future?

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

No! I'm out of the
future's business!
AHHHHH--!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I predict you are going
to fall flat on your
face.

(SCHEMER TURNS AND FLEES WILDLY TOWARD
THE PLATFORM, TANGLING HIMSELF IN
HIS ROBE AND TURBAN AND FALLING
FLAT ON HIS FACE. HE FINALLY
MANAGES TO DRAG HIMSELF OUT OF
SIGHT, AS THE OTHERS LAUGH)

(FADE TO BLACK)

two victims